

'A tragic story to tell'

Humanitarian crisis grows in Syrian conflict

AMMAN, Jordan (BP) — "Every family has a tragic story to tell of their journey that got them to where they are now."

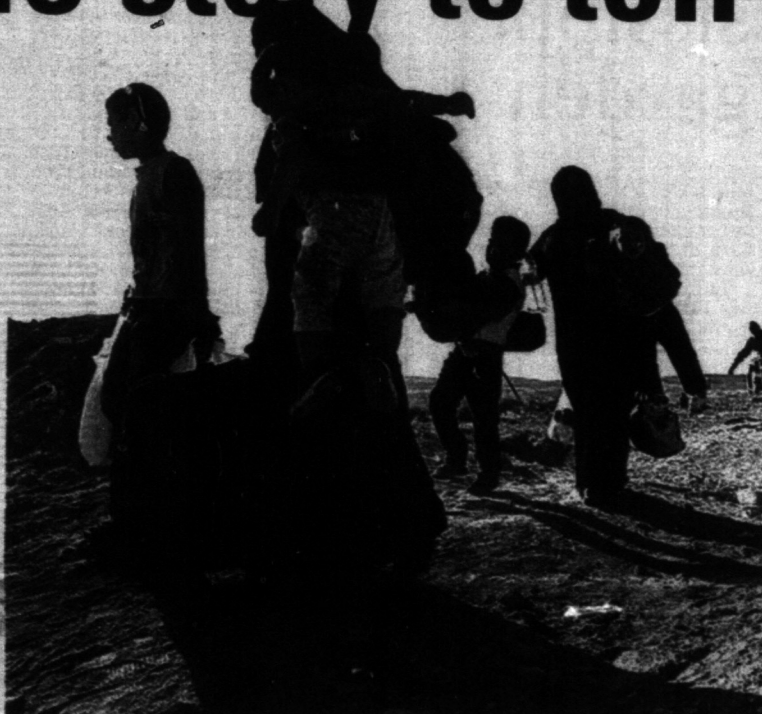
Don Alan (not his real name), the Christian worker who made that observation, is trying to determine how to respond to the needs he confronts among Syrian refugees attempting to escape the brutal civil war in their homeland — needs that are outpacing the funding his work receives. "That is a tragedy, that is sadness," Alan said.

Even so, he sees signs of God's hand and God's plan unfolding in Syria's tragic events. "For the first time we have been able to sit and share the Gospel with Syrian families, and they are responding," Alan said.

Alan seeks to point to the "only hope" that can be found in Jesus. "He is the only one who can bring light to the darkest situation, and Syrians are in their darkest hour. I am afraid that much of the world is not really keen to turn the light on to see what it looks like, and to me that reality is terrible."

"Jesus commands us to help those who are poor and destitute and forgotten by the world. We have a responsibility to share His love in a way that is a cup of water, a bowl of food, ways that meet their needs today — so that they can face tomorrow with hope and a future."

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FLEEING WAR — Syrian mothers carry their children and belongings as they flee from the relentless civil war in their homeland that has claimed many of their husbands and other family members. The mothers often wait for days for a window of opportunity to cross a border into the relative safety of refugee camps in the countries surrounding Syria. (BP photo courtesy of International Mission Board)

8 Iranian Christians arrested after raid

TEHRAN (BP and local reports)

— Eight Iranian Christians have been charged with "action against the national security," and "propaganda against the system," after being arrested in a raid of an evening prayer service. Observers pointed to the actions as evidence of ongoing official persecution of Christians in Iran.

The news comes as Iranian-American pastor Saeed Abedini marked 300 days in a brutal Tehran prison July 23. Supporters say he is being held and tortured solely on the basis of his faith, enduring intense physical and psychological abuse.

Earlier in July, the American Center for Law and Justice (ACLU) reported that persecution of Christians in Muslim nations is on the rise, particularly in Iran. "In the Islamic Republic of Iran alone there are countless Christians imprisoned, facing charges or convictions for one crime, apostasy (essentially becoming a Christian in a radical Islamic nation)," ACLU reported.

Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW) said July 18 that the eight members of the Church of Iran were sentenced in Shiraz, more than 500 miles

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Sudan Christians face bleak present, unknown future



GRATEFUL TO BE FREE — Members of Nuru Baptist Church in Juba, South Sudan, sing in celebration over the new nation's independence, which gave Christians like them the freedom to worship openly. To the north in predominantly Muslim Sudan, however, pressures have escalated against foreign aid workers and Sudanese Christians. (BP photo)

LONDON (BP) — Security forces in Sudan reportedly are focusing on the removal of foreigners who work for hundreds of foreign aid organizations within its borders.

The concern, raised by two workers in statements to Baptist Press, follows a report on religious freedom in predominantly Muslim Sudan released July 9 by the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) — the second anniversary of South Sudan's independence from Sudan.

USCIRF chair Katrina Lantos Swett expressed fear for South Sudanese citizens living in Sudan, saying they are "stateless" and face severe religious freedom violations. In releasing the commission's July 9 report, she called on the U.S. government and its allies to "increase their efforts to help Sudan and South Sudan resolve the status of their nationals residing in the other's territory."

The security crackdown against aid workers, meanwhile, is "aimed at foreign Christians... under the pretense of trying to stop proselytization by Christians," reported Franklin Lloyd (not his real name), a foreign worker who lived in Sudan for more than a decade, "but many of the people thrown out have nothing to do with that."

"Nothing is formal or legal, there is no formal written announcement that something is going on, there is no open accusation, there are no court cases," Lloyd said. "Everything is either being done by intimidation or by media campaigns that raise pressure to form public opinion."

Lloyd reported that security officials break into the homes of foreigners suspected to be Christians and confiscate their electronics, passports, and any form of Christian

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From the editor

WILLIAM PERKINS

Our Mississippi Baptist garden

In Mississippi Baptist life, as in Christianity as a whole, we are the benefactors of the sacrificial actions and efforts of the spiritual giants who preceded us. They planted this remarkable Baptist garden in which we live, then others watered it, and we live in the blessings of their faithfulness every day.

One of those spiritual giants, among the many Mississippi Baptists have produced, is Margaret McRae Lackey. She was born in 1858 in Copiah County, the fifth of nine children born to James and Elizabeth Lackey. She grew up doing what most girls in Mississippi did in that era. She played games with her friends, went to school, did her chores at home, and attended church.

Margaret Lackey went on to attend Hillman College in Clinton, which we now know as Mississippi College, one of our three Baptist-affiliated institutions of higher learning in the state. She studied to be a teacher and indeed taught for many years in Mississippi schools.

Raised in the Baptist tradition of the day, Lackey — who never married — had a deep love for missions whose goal it was (and is) to spread the Gospel message of Jesus Christ to people who had never heard of the Savior. She used her teaching skills to help the children in her church learn to share her love of missions.

She also utilized her talent as a gifted poet and writer to help Christians understand the importance of missions. She was the author of several studies on missions.

In 1912, Margaret Lackey became the first paid leader of the Mississippi Woman's Missionary Union (WMU). Her passion for missions was obvious to all who met her. She once wrote, "Sisters, we have done passing well this year, but, oh, the untouched multitudes of women and children in Mississippi whose souls are crying silently yet know not for what they are crying."

After a storied career, Margaret Lackey retired in 1930 from her position as corresponding secretary of

Mississippi WMU. Many more Mississippi Baptist women, inspired by her model life, have been raised up by the Lord for Kingdom service since then.

In 1935, Margaret Lackey was among those who led Mississippi WMU to begin a special annual observance to emphasize the importance of state missions. That special observance eventually turned into the Season of Prayer for State Missions.

In 1935, the offering taken during the Season of Prayer for State Missions was named in honor of the woman who today remains one of Mississippi Baptists' most outstanding leaders: the Margaret Lackey State Missions Offering.

Margaret McRae Lackey died in 1948 just a few days short of her 90th birthday, having lived during a most memorable time in Mississippi and American history. As a child, she witnessed the Civil War and the privations of Reconstruction. As an adult, she lived through World War I, the Great Depression, and World War II. No doubt, her life experiences convinced her of the importance of bringing everyone she could to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.

The first state mission offering in 1903 received a total of \$294.38. The 2013 goal for the Margaret Lackey State Mission Offering is \$2.1 million. Miss Lackey would be pleased to know that the work in which she so earnestly believed has been carried on in her name for these many years.

Today the Margaret Lackey State Missions Offering encompasses a multitude of important state programs, such as Christian camping, church planting, disaster relief, literacy, and volunteer missionary assistance. Gifts to the offering make possible many of the Mississippi Baptist programs that exist today.

Now it's our turn to tend to the garden. May we be found faithful in this and all endeavors we undertake in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, and in remembrance of spiritual giants like Margaret Lackey.

From primary to secondary

The First Amendment is a promise that we are free to live holistically, according to the dictates of our conscience. Last month, however, the First Amendment was subjected to assaults seeking to force the fully free exercise of faith into the most private of places: our homes and houses of worship.

The intent is simple and fatal: redefine the meaning of religious freedom, making it a secondary right when exercised in the public square or marketplace. If religious freedom becomes a secondary right, how will it affect you and your family? What challenges would you face if pressured to choose between your religious convictions and your job, business or livelihood?

Imagine you run a bakery. You love your customers, have never denied services to anyone and have employed openly gay individuals. One day, a regular customer and her partner order a cake for their wedding ceremony. You are very fond of this customer but believe that marriage was created by God as the union of one man and one woman. Affirming the marriage by baking a cake would violate your belief. You thank your customer for her business and politely explain that you cannot provide a cake.

The next week, you receive a letter saying you have been sued under your state's anti-discrimination laws; you face litigation and fines if you continue to refuse to bake the cake. A lawsuit could cripple the business you have spent years to build. What do you do?

What if your daughter's lifelong dream is to be a counselor? She calls crying and says she has been expelled from her program. You are confused. She is an honor student at the top of her class. She received her assignment for a required course, and the client was seeking counseling about homosexual behavior. Her religious convictions prevented her from affirming a homosexual relationship, so to best serve the client, she asked her supervisor to assign the client to another counselor.

Her supervisor said she must submit to a remediation program to "see the error of her ways" and change her beliefs or withdraw from the program. What do you say to your daughter?

Maybe your family owns a successful



Guest opinion

with J. Randy Forbes

business. You started with one store but now have hundreds of stores across several states. A family of deep faith, your religious beliefs are inseparable from the way you live your lives — including your business decisions. You close your stores on Sundays to honor a day of rest and give your employees time with their families. Though similar stores often pay minimum wage, your full-time employees receive a starting salary almost double the minimum. Full-time employees also are eligible for excellent health insurance plans.

Under the new health care law you will be forced to pay significant fines if your insurance coverage does not include contraceptive and abortifacient services. Such services, which violate your religious belief that all life is precious, have never been covered under your company insurance plan. You request an exemption but are told your religious beliefs are irrelevant because you are making a profit. You will be fined less money if you offer no insurance, but ceasing coverage would harm your employees. What do you do?

These scenarios are based on real cases happening across the country, a country where people originally came to escape religious persecution. They demonstrate a trend toward a dangerous redefinition of "freedom of religion" to mean simply "freedom of worship."

The forced compartmentalization of faith fundamentally conflicts with the protection of religious freedom. Our First Amendment freedoms are deemed subordinate, when in fact our Founding Fathers revered religious freedom by

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Moore: Consensus exists on immigration reform

WASHINGTON (BP and local reports) — Widespread agreement on immigration reform exists among Americans in spite of differences on how to achieve it, Southern Baptist ethicist Russell D. Moore said at a Capitol Hill news conference.

The president of the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission gave a hopeful assessment to reporters July 24 as evangelical Christians gathered to pray and persuade members of the U.S. House of Representatives to reform a flawed system that has resulted in an estimated 11 million undocumented immigrants living illegally in the United States.

The future of immigration reform remains uncertain in the House, where Republican leaders have said they will work on their own legislation and not take up a bill approved by the Senate in late June. Some conservative Republicans have sharply criticized the Senate measure, especially its approach to border security.

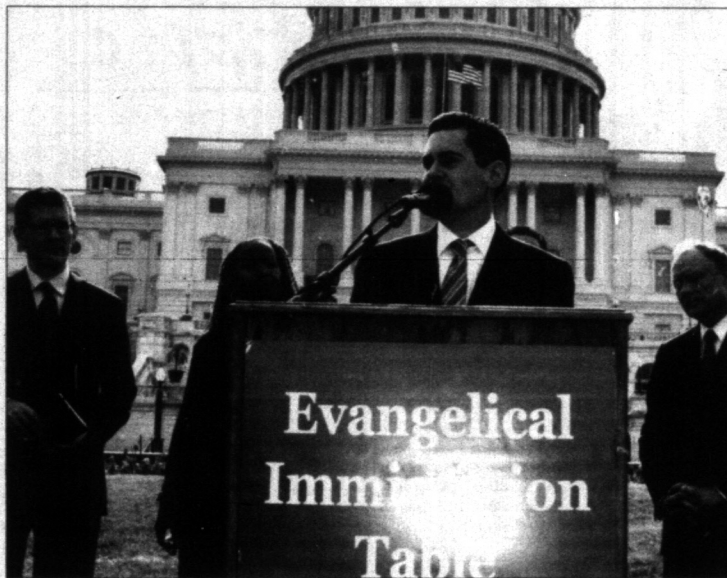
Moore described the consensus as remarkable "not only among people who agree with us on immigration reform. Most of us in this country agree the system is broken. Most of us in this country agree we have to have some way of addressing the 11 or 20 million people who are living in invisibility right now."

"I also think that many of the people who would be reluctant right now are reluctant because of genuine concerns that we share. They want to make sure that the process is done right, so it doesn't have to be done again in the future. We think that can be done."

"They want to make sure there's accountability for people who have come here illegally, that they are held accountable to the full responsibilities of citizenship. We share that concern, and we think there's a way forward there, and they also want to be sure that we have borders that are secure and a rule of law that is upheld. We share that concern as well, and we also think there's a way forward there."

Moore described the differences over immigration reform as "not a clash of world views as much as it is a question of prudentially how do we get forward with some common goals that the country seems to be coalescing around" currently.

The Evangelical Immigration Table (EIT), a coalition of evangelical leaders that supports broad immigration reform and includes Moore, sponsored



IMMIGRATION REFORM — Russell D. Moore, president of the Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission in Nashville, addresses reporters July 24 on Capitol Hill during a press conference called by the Evangelical Immigration Table. To Moore's immediate left is David Crosby, senior pastor at First Church, New Orleans, who also spoke at the press conference. (BP photo)

the news conference, a worship service and visits to congressional members by more than 300 evangelicals. The EIT also sponsored a similar day of activities on Capitol Hill in April.

At the news conference, speakers pointed to growing evangelical support for immigration reform, citing the more than 180 leaders who have signed EIT's principles for reform and the more than 10,000 "grass-roots signatories" to the document.

The evangelical leaders reaffirmed they have not endorsed the Senate-approved bill or any other legislation, just the EIT principles. They also said they have not supported any particular policy process.

Evangelicals reiterated to reporters they do not support amnesty. "We're talking about accountability," Wendell Griffen said at the news conference. Griffen is pastor of New Millennium Baptist Church in Little Rock, Ar., which does not list an affiliation with the Arkansas Baptist Convention

or Southern Baptist Convention on its web site.

"If you pay a fine, pay taxes, pass a background check, study English and pledge allegiance to our country, that's accountability. That's not amnesty," Griffen said.

Moore and fellow Southern Baptist David Crosby both pointed to the Gospel as the reason for their support of immigration reform.

"As evangelical Christians, we are defined by the Gospel of Jesus Christ, a Gospel that is in scripture a Gospel of both justice and mercy, of righteousness and compassion," Moore told reporters, "and we're here today not as a political pressure group or a political action committee. We're here as a group of believers in Jesus Christ who want to let our elected officials know that we are praying for them, we're praying for wisdom, we're praying for discernment, and we're praying for justice and for compassion in a system that is broken."

Crosby, senior pastor of First Church in New Orleans, told Baptist Press after the news conference, "I am here because I am compelled by the Gospel to be here. I'm not compelled politically... but I'm here compelled by the Gospel because I think this fits perfectly in the story of Jesus when He illustrated essential faith in God by telling the story of the Good Samaritan. There's a guy beat up. Some folks want to walk on the other side of the road. I mean, if I'm going to follow Jesus, I just can't do that."

First Church in New Orleans has multiple compassion ministries, several that serve undocumented workers and their children in the process, Crosby said.

"In my experience, undocumented workers are the most victimized and most at-risk people in my community," he said at the news conference. "They are robbed, raped, and assaulted with impunity by criminals who know they will not go to the police. We've got to stop that... [M]aybe they're here through their own fault, but how we treat them while they're here is on us."

He told reporters it is "time for our legislators to stand up and say, as hard as it is, 'Let's fix this. Let's do the right thing — for the sake of their humanity and of ours.'"

In 2011, messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention in Phoenix, Ar., approved a resolution on immigration reform that called for the advancement of the Gospel of Jesus while pursuing justice and compassion. The measure urged the government to make a priority of border security and holding businesses accountable in their hiring.

It also requested public officials establish, after securing the borders, "a just and compassionate path to legal status, with appropriate restitutionary measures, for those undocumented immigrants already living in our country." It specified the resolution was not to be interpreted as supporting amnesty.

EIT has called for a solution that:

- "Respects the God-given dignity of every person;
- "Protects the unity of the immediate family;
- "Respects the rule of law;
- "Guarantees secure national borders;
- "Ensures fairness to taxpayers;
- "Establishes a path toward legal status and citizenship for those who qualify and who wish to become permanent residents."

Man enters Mo. Baptist church, opens fire on congregation

NORWOOD, Mo. (BP) — A man is in custody after witnesses say he opened fire during a July 21 worship service at First Church in Norwood, Mo. Worshipers tackled him before anyone was shot. One man injured his shoulder in the scuffle, but no other injuries were reported.

Pastor Stephen Fugitt was about halfway through his morning sermon when a man carrying a "high-caliber" revolver entered the church and fired two or three shots,

Fugitt told The Pathway, the newsjournal of the Missouri Baptist Convention.

The suspect shot at least once into the floor between himself and Fugitt while walking toward the platform, Fugitt said. "He pulled his gun up and before he could fire, one of the guys grabbed his arm and it (the next shot) went up into the ceiling," he said.

Several more men piled onto the suspect and wrestled the gun away from him until the Wright County Sheriff's Department

could arrive. "He's a pretty big guy," Fugitt said. "They weren't going to let him up."

Deputies later discovered a shotgun in the back seat of the suspect's car.

Fugitt praised God that no one was seriously injured, and thanked the men who acted quickly to subdue the suspect at the church that draws about 60 worshipers Sunday mornings. "They saved lives I'm sure," he said.

The church has had previous contact with the suspect. "It wasn't

totally random," Fugitt said.

Worshippers had last seen the suspect in early June when he threatened to return to the church with a gun, Fugitt said. The church called an ambulance which took the man to a psychiatric hospital after the June threat, Fugitt said.

Previously, the suspect had been to the church only two or three times over the past three or four years, the pastor said.

Everyone remained relatively calm after the shooting, said Fugitt. After the incident

ended, the pastor led worshipers in a prayer before they left the church. Fugitt asked other churches to remain alert and have a plan to deal with emergencies such as this.

"We actually have a plan, but it happened so fast, not much else could have been done except what happened," Fugitt said.

The alleged gunman's name has not been released, but he was in custody July 22 with charges pending. About 600 people live in Norwood, 30 miles east of Springfield.

Do you love the old songs? I am talking about those great old songs of years gone by that moved your heart, lifted your spirits, pointed you toward heaven and put your mind in a God directed frame of thought that blessed you all over. Me too! Some of them seem to hang around and become a part of the praise experience even in churches that do not particularly use or even like hymns. For instance, Amazing Grace is so deeply woven into our national consciousness that it would no doubt stick even if they passed laws against it. Isn't it interesting how at special times of the year great, yet ancient hymns continue to be a mainstay with deep meaning? How precious it is to hear or to join in singing *America the Beautiful* on the Fourth of July. How could you celebrate Jesus' coming at Christmas without *Silent Night* or *Joy to the World*?

One of the things that I find the most interesting whatever your particular love of music may be is that the people who love the old hymns struggle with coming to appreciate the new hymns. Folks who love the new sometimes have a real problem with and push back on the old. The more I see it the less I understand it. It is as if you are forbidden to love both which, of course, is absolutely ridiculous.

The other day I got to thinking about how wonderful our grandkids are. The kids are fantastic, but the grandkids now that is a different universe. There are eight of them. There are five good ole boys and three sweet girls. The oldest is 17 and the youngest is in the terrific two's. While each one of them is absolutely wonderful, every one of them is standalone different with a unique personality like no one else.

I still remember the excitement and the joy when the very first one came along. I remember also the delight and blessing when number eight got here. What I do



Love Limits

not remember is grandma and me struggling to love or not to love any one of the bunch. There never seemed to be any kind of issue where we were going to have to make a decision to reject some of the older ones so that we could love some of the younger ones. You see, that kind of struggle has nothing to do with the kids that come along. It has everything to do with the kind of love that we have in our hearts. It is a love that really does not have any limitations. It wraps itself around one child after another after another and never stops loving the others.

Now that is somewhat the kind of love that is spoken of in biblical terms, the highest form of love — the agape kind of love. It simply loves because it is in your heart to do so and not because of actions, abilities or measurement of someone else. It is the kind of love that God shows toward us simply because of who He is. It is not because of what we think, door stop doing. The Bible says, "God is love" (1 John 4:8). That great God loves you. He knows where you have been. He knows what you have done. He knows your efforts to do good, and He

knows all of your failures. He knows the wickedness that may control the inner workings of our minds and hearts. He knows that He created us for good things and God honoring things. He loves us.

Somehow when He comes into our hearts He gives us a new look at life, a new capacity to love, a new way of thinking and a new way of loving. That love can literally become limitless in many ways, on many days, and in many experiences. This same truth can be applied in so many facets of life and especially in church life. Having served as a pastor for decades, I always found it interesting and baffling to see the way that people related to and sometimes shunned or even rejected the new pastor. In this case, it was me.

When that happened most of the time it was not because they knew me or had ever met me, and they may not have even heard me preach. It was simply because their love was the kind of love that was attached to someone who had been at the church previously. They interpreted loving me or having anything to do with me as a rejection of the relationship they had with their former

pastor. For those of you who may think that sounds ludicrous or maybe you are so disengaged from church life that you do not recognize that happens, believe me it is real. Many a pastor struggles with beginning a ministry in a new location because too many of the folks have a limited heartbeat.

Now reverse that situation and it can still be awkward. There are times when you leave a church and people want to love you exclusively. You become a detriment to the next person who will serve. I never wanted that, fostered that or intended that to happen. You see, our great God is a God of limitlessness whether it comes to mercy, grace, forgiveness or love. When we come to know Jesus as Lord, He comes to live in us and to bring the whole realm of God's love to rest in our hearts and to flow from us in immeasurable proportions.

Please understand that there are places and ways that God does limit love. As shocking as that may sound, it is absolutely true. The fact is that neither He nor you and I can love good and evil at the same time. Right and wrong will never coexist. He declares that we must choose.

One of the most dramatic invitations ever given in the Bible was given by the great leader Moses as they came to the edge of the Promised Land. In Deuteronomy he had preached several sermons, but at the end of the book he closes out by giving an invitation. "I have set before you light and darkness, good and evil." He persuasively calls on the people to choose good, to choose light and to follow God. Choose Him today! Follow Him day by day, and He will lead you into the limitlessness of His grace and love not only to fill your heart but to overflow through your life as you touch people all around you.

The author can be contacted at directions@mbcb.org.

Staff Changes




FIRST CHURCH, NETTLETON, has called Martin Hayes as student pastor. He is shown with his wife, Casey.



(ABOVE) MT. PISGAH CHURCH, RANKIN COUNTY, called Hal Hood as pastor June 23. He is shown with Holly, Parker, and Madison.

(LEFT) GOOD HOPE CHURCH, RICHTON, has called Woody Baughn as pastor. He comes with his wife, Shelley, and children Samuel, Ruth, and Levi. Baughn comes from central Alabama where he served as pastor for over eight years.



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Servants of the manifold grace of God

1 PETER 4:10

2013 Margaret Lackey Offering for State Missions

OFFERING GOAL: \$2,100,000

Margaret Lackey Offering

CENTRAL HILLS

From camper to counselor

By Tony Martin
Associate Editor

Who says dreams don't come true?

For Isaac Cannon, a dream came true in the form of an opportunity to serve on staff at Central Hills Retreat near Kosciusko. Cannon, a member of North Morton Church near Lena, cherished a long-held dream of serving others at Central Hills. That dream became a reality this summer.

"I was about ten years old the first time I came to Central Hills as a RA," said the Mississippi College student. "As a camper, you'd be a part of every activity, or you'd go to worship, and you'd be with your fellow campers. Then you'd see the staffers and the relationships they have — they were kind and always got along. That's what I wanted."

Cannon attended camp every summer through his high school graduation, and he noted staffers who had an impact on him growing up. "There was Jacob McBride," Cannon said. "He was one that really sticks out. He showed a lot of care, and the year I had him as counselor I watched him reach out to kids in our group who had really deep problems. He had a lot to relate to us. I wanted to be able to do that."

This is Cannon's first year on staff. "When I got here this summer, it helped to kind of know my way around and know where everything is. I knew we'd be walking a lot, and it would be hot and tiring."

"What I didn't expect was the mental stress," Cannon continued. "You have a lot of that dealing with the kids, and that was one thing I wasn't aware of."

Cannon has come to realize that the boys at camp often have issues at home. "I've had a couple of boys with bad home situations, and I had one boy whose mother was recently deceased. You see them come in with their heads hanging low, and you feel like they're going to have a really bad week, but by the end of the week they're smiling and jumping around. That's something that really touches your heart."

For a counselor such as Cannon, a typical day includes getting up and getting the kids ready for the day. "You'll have a million questions to answer, such as 'what's for lunch?'" said Cannon. "As you're walking around during the day, the campers want to talk to you about your life and they want to tell you about theirs. Basically, you just listen. You'll work with them in several activities during the day, just telling your own story when you can. It's a long day. Then at worship, the campers will sometimes sing, really praising God. You may end the day feeling sort of down because there has been a lot of mental stress, you've answered all those questions, but at the end of worship you get to see the true reward."

Central Hills offers three day camps which go from Sunday to Wednesday, and from Thursday to Saturday. The RA Weeks are full Monday through Friday events.



HAVING A BALL — Isaac Cannon (left), a Central Hills Retreat counselor from near Lena, prepares to play dodge ball with an unidentified camper. Cannon was a participant at RA Camp for years before becoming a staffer. (Photo by Tony Martin)

This particular week Cannon was responsible for twelve boys as a co-counselor. He is sharing a group ranging in age from eight years old to 12 years old with another counselor. "This week, every one of my kids came from the same church. It doesn't always work that way, but this week it did."

"One thing we try to do is to find out if there is a guest who came with a different youth group. They might not know the people they are with, so we work to make sure they have friends," said Cannon.

Cannon said that counselors are also responsible for helping with activities. "You can't just sit around," he said. "After the end of lunch, supper, or a snack time, you have to make sure you get to the activity you're helping with. You have to have everything ready ten or so minutes ahead of time. You have to know what you're doing. I'm on the zip line later, and we all need to know our responsibilities. Someone has to relay the kids up, someone has to be on the tower, one has to take kids to the platform on the bottom — that has to be all planned out. And we have to be sure we encourage the kids. When we're assigned a certain activity, we have to work with all the kids, not just the ones in your group."

Cannon is excited about the ministry opportunity camp offers. "I am feeling a call to something in ministry," he said. "On campfire night, kids can really open up. You get the chance to lead kids to Christ — that's the best feeling you can have. That's what the reward is."

The ministry at Central Hills is funded in part by gifts to the Margaret Lackey Offering for State Missions. Roddy Reed is the manager of Garaywa Camp and Conference Center in Clinton, which is administered by the Mississippi Woman's Missionary Union and is Mississippi Baptists' only other active encampment. Like Central Hills, Garaywa is available to groups year-round in addition to the summer schedule and is supported by gifts to the Margaret Lackey Offering for State Missions.

"We had 1,256 campers this summer," said Reed. "All of them heard the Gospel. The heart of Garaywa is missions, and the Margaret Lackey Offering for State Missions is the lifeblood for making that happen," he said.

Missions Offering

MISSION VOLUNTEERS | \$700,000

More than 12,000 Mississippi Baptists participated in the Margaret Lackey Offering for State Missions. Our churches are connected to Southern Baptist Missions. For more information: (800) 748-1631 or (601) 292-3231.

GARAYWA | \$400,000

Garaywa Camp and Conference Center provided more than 8,500 persons last year. During Summer Camp, Christ. Jessica Morrison has more information: (601) 292-3231.

CENTRAL HILLS | \$400,000

Campfires and outdoor challenges helped almost 10,000 people build a relationship to Christ at Central Hills last year. Our time commitments to the Lord and another 117 re- information: (662) 289-9730.

NEW CHURCH STARTS | \$100,000

Church Planters engage lost communities with the gospel. Churches find excitement in seeing successful planter efforts. Twelve planters worked last year through M- more of Mississippi than ever before. George Ross (769) 226-1777 have more information.

COMMUNITY MISSION PROJECTS | \$100,000

Margaret Lackey grants help fund locally designed mission projects all across our state. Associational Mission needs and facilitate the grant writing. Talk to your local association or call David Michel: (800) 748-1631 or (601) 292-3231.

DISASTER RELIEF | \$60,000

Margaret Lackey gifts help train certified first responders. Roads and hangar after a tornado hit Hattiesburg. Jim Didlake has more information: (800) 748-1631 or (601) 292-3231.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE MINISTRIES | \$60,000

From Parchman to your county jail, Margaret Lackey courses for a Mississippi offender population of more (662) 721-0264 and John Henry (601) 508-0283 have more information.

COLLEGE OUTREACH | \$30,000

The whole world has come to Mississippi on our call to fund student interns who work in ethnic evangelism. Weaver McCracken has more information: (800) 748-1631 or (601) 292-3231.

CHRISTIAN WOMEN'S / CHRISTIAN

Twenty-two percent of Mississippi's population live in poverty. Job preparation and Christian encouragement can transform lives. Job Corps offers that ministry through 17 different sites. (800) 748-1631 or (601) 292-3232 and Sandra Nash (601) 292-3231.

CROSS CULTURAL EVANGELISM | \$100,000

Mississippi Baptists worship in seven different languages. Leaders among our Choctaw, Hispanic, Chinese, Korean, and Vietnamese bring God's Kingdom to fulfillment within our state. (800) 748-1631 or (601) 292-3231.

LANGUAGE/DEAF MINISTRY | \$25,000

Margaret Lackey makes sure that our non-reading and hearing-impaired friends hear the gospel. ESL, ARW and Chronological Bible Studies open people's hearts and minds. Call Paula Smith (800) 748-1631 or (601) 292-3231 for information about Language Ministry, or Jim Booth (601) 292-3231 for Deaf Ministry.

PORT MINISTRY | \$15,000

Mississippi hospitality and gospel witness are the culture. Over 7,000 seafarers visit our state every year and more. Adrian Turner (228) 623-0103 has information about Port Ministry. Mooneyham (228) 832-4311 has more information.

Offering Goal: \$2,000,000



Offering for State Missions

"...serve others as faithful stewards of the manifold grace of God." - 1 Peter 4:10-11

Opportunities

participated in short-term missions last year. Your gifts help ensure that Baptists missionaries around the world. Ken Rhodes (601) 292-3239.

provided mission training and inspiration for more than 44 girls made professions of faith in the summer camp. (601) 924-7034.

helped almost 2,500 campers rekindle their faith last year. One hundred sixty boys made first professions of faith. Another 147 renewed their faith. Jim Ray has more information.

helped almost 2,500 campers rekindle their faith last year. One hundred sixty boys made first professions of faith. Another 147 renewed their faith. Jim Ray has more information.

PROJECTS | \$180,000
designed mission projects in communities and national mission Directors help identify community needs. To your local mission director for more information. (601) 461-1651 or (601) 292-3231.

led first responders so that we are ready to clear the area. (601) 461-1651 or (601) 292-3231.

STORIES | \$60,000
Margaret Lackey provides Bible studies and recovery for more than 75,000. Charles Jones (601) 508-4283 have more information.

10,000
appi on our college campuses. Margaret Lackey helps with evangelism and inter- national student ministries. (601) 748-1651 or (601) 292-3302.

CHRISTIAN MEN'S JOB CORPS | \$25,000
population lives below the poverty line. Sometimes gent can transform a family's economic standing. 17 different sites across the state. Tammy Anderson (601) 748-1651 or (601) 292-3302 have more information.

GELISM | \$25,000
different languages every Sunday. Preparing spiritual Chinese, Korean, and African-American neighbors within our state. David Michel has more information.

TRY | \$25,000
non-reading and non-hearing neighbors have access to logical Bible Storying provide significant access to. (601) 748-1651 or (601) 292-3336 for more information. or Jim Booth (601) 201-3361 for more about the

ness are the currency to our Port Ministry centers. Every year and many meet Jesus while they are here. information about the Pascagoula Ministry, and Steve information about the Gulfport Ministry.

total: \$2,100,000

COMMUNITY MISSION PROJECTS

World Changers change lives in Natchez

By Tony Martin
Associate Editor

For 23 years, World Changers, an initiative of LifeWay Christian Resources, has gone about the business of working to improve substandard housing. This year, more than 16,500 students will be working in more than 82 cities across the country and Puerto Rico to help homeowners with housing needs.

Two hundred of those students - from Texas, Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Georgia - found themselves in Natchez July 22 - 27 serving on 18 crews at 18 worksites. These junior high and high school students painted, landscaped, built wheelchair ramps, and completed other meaningful tasks during their time in the Natchez area. Students hit the ground running, having completed a six-session "how-to" study in their local churches prior to arriving.

Funding for the project is a joint effort of the Southern Baptist Convention, the Mississippi Baptist Convention and the Margaret Lackey Offering for State Missions, Adams-Union Association, the students who paid \$250 each, the City of Natchez, local contributions, and local churches and organizations providing noon meals.

Etta James (named for the singer) is one Natchez resident who understands the ministry of World Changers. James' home received a new front porch, new screen doors, and fresh paint. James has lived in her home for 17 years, but it was originally her great aunt's home.

"Our alderman came around and said that a group of kids would be coming to Natchez to help with work we weren't able to do," James said. "So I went to the courthouse to fill out an application form, and I made the list. The kids started yesterday, and their work will take about three days."

"I love these kids," James said. "I've been walking out ever since they've been here, hugging them. It brings tears to my eyes. It's so sweet."

The students were equally as moved.

Riley Hines, from First Church, Newton, Tex., and Jonathon Rosenauer, from First Church, Gonzales, Tex., were typical. Hines is going into the twelfth grade, and Rosenauer is a student at the University of Mary-Hardin Baylor in Belton, Tex.

Hines is a first-timer on a World Changers project. "It's just exactly what I expected," she said. "Hot, hard work, and great people."

When asked why she wanted to be involved in World Changers, Hines said, "Our church was going, and I love being able to help people. I'm all about mission projects. Our youth leader, Josh, had been praying about where to serve, and he felt led to Natchez."

Rosenauer had served on two previous projects, in Baton Rouge, La., and Sugar Hill, Ga. "For me, my whole life has been

built around serving people in whatever way possible. So this is a great project for me to help people. It's very near and dear to my heart - really, a calling."

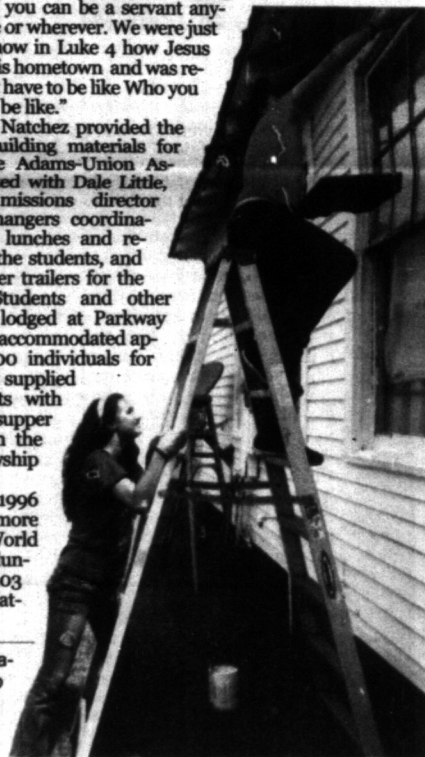
"One of the great things about World Changers is the experience of meeting people," Rosenauer continued. "Every time I've done this, I've seen the joy of the people we are helping, whether they are Christians or not, just by us being there. For selfish reasons, there is how good you can feel just helping that person."

"I like going places just to see how different people are," said Hines. "We have it so much better than so many people, you know? Being able to help them is great."

"One thing I've learned is that you don't have to take a week out of the summer, or a week out of the year, to serve someone," Rosenauer said. "Why does it take World Changers for you to help others? It's more than building houses. It's about being a servant. And you can be a servant anywhere, at home or wherever. We were just talking about how in Luke 4 how Jesus went back to His hometown and was rejected. You just have to be like Who you are claiming to be like."

The City of Natchez provided the funding for building materials for the week. The Adams-Union Association worked with Dale Little, associational missions director and World Changers coordinator, to supply lunches and refreshments to the students, and provided shower trailers for the participants. Students and other workers were lodged at Parkway Church, which accommodated approximately 200 individuals for the week, and supplied the participants with breakfast and supper when eating in the church's fellowship hall.

Between 1996 and 2008, more than 2100 World Changers volunteers repaired 103 homes in the Natchez area.



HOLD 'ER STEADY! - Riley Hines, Newton, Tex., holds the ladder for Jonathon Rosenauer, Gonzales, Tex., as Rosenauer applies a fresh coat of paint to the home of Natchez resident Etta James. The students were part of the World Changers project July 22 - 27 in Natchez, which was partly funded by gifts from the Margaret Lackey Offering for State Missions. (Photo by Tony Martin)



New Church Starts

Community Mission Projects

Disaster Relief

Season of Prayer for State Missions:

August-October

MISSION VOLUNTEERS

Church moves past 'typical' to have impact on missions

By William H. Perkins Jr.
Editor

Chas Rowland was pastor of Duck Hill Church in Montgomery County when he identified what he characterizes as a typical problem in Mississippi Baptist churches.



ROWLAND

"Duck Hill Baptist Church is a great church. They are willing to give and give, but they were struggling to go beyond that. They did not know how to be mobilized, how to get personally involved in missions," said Rowland, who currently pastors Bovina Church in Warren County.

Rowland, a self-styled "military brat" whose father was stationed at Keesler Air Force Base in Biloxi, decided to change that situation. He began to pray, and the Lord led him to the Missions Mobilization Department at the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB) in Jackson.

As the name implies, the department helps Mississippi Baptist churches move members from warming pews to winning people to Jesus with hands-on participation in missions. Ken Rhodes, longtime Mississippi Baptist pastor and associational missions director, heads the department. Although the department is several years old now, it is one of the newest departments at the convention board and was specifically started to get Mississippi Baptists on to mission fields.

Rhodes and the department's personnel worked to pair Rowland's Duck Hill congregation with an ongoing mission effort in the Finger Lakes/Watkins Glen area of western New York, between Syracuse and Rochester. The mission effort

there is supported by the Send North America ministry of the Southern Baptist Convention's North American Mission Board.

Rowland, who holds a Ph.D. in historical theology from Mid-America Seminary in Memphis, recalls the rejection encountered on that mission trip. "There was outright hostility. Doors were slammed in our faces," he said.

The former youth minister at Harmony Church in New Albany returned to Duck Hill and, undeterred, led the church to organize a missions committee and begin planning a second mission trip to the area. In the summer of 2011, a team headed back to Finger Lakes on a mission trip sponsored this time by the church itself.

They decided to take a different approach on the second trip, Rowland said. They went into the community and engaged in service work, such as washing the plate glass windows of the businesses in town. It was such an unusual gesture that many of the business owners and their employees, as well as passers-by, stopped what they were doing to come over and find out what the Mississippians were up to.

The community service effort resulted in many opportunities to share the Gospel, Rowland said, and energized the team's members to witness even more. Momentum built and filled the team members with a contagious enthusiasm that spilled over into the church's local mission work when they returned to Duck Hill, he added.

"We started going into our own community, and it was awesome," Rowland said. "When I left Duck Hill Baptist Church about a year ago to answer the call to pastor Bovina Baptist Church, they were still going full throttle."

Rowland and Bovina Church are working toward repeating the spiritual success encountered by the Duck Hill Baptists. "We have started a mis-



COMMUNITY SERVICE—Young members of Duck Hill Church in Montgomery County wash windows during a mission trip to the Finger Lakes/Watkins Glen area of western New York State. The Mississippians discovered that such community service efforts opened doors to presenting the Gospel message. Participating in the mission trip were (from left) Logan Long, Haley Carroll, Austin Rainey, and Jordan Knight. (BR special photo)

sions committee now at Bovina, and we're praying for the Lord to lead us to our mission field," he said.

Gifts to the Margaret Lackey Offering for State Missions help fund the Missions Mobilization Department, where Rowland first discovered the resources that enabled the church he pastored to become directly involved in missions. The 2013 offering goal includes \$700,000 for such efforts through the department.

"We would never have gone to New York to help plant a church, if it had not been for Margaret Lackey funding and encouragement," Rowland said.

For more information on the Margaret Lackey Offering for State Missions, visit mbcb.org and click on the Unlimited icon.

Order Promotional Resources

THEME POSTER

Order several and display them on bulletin boards, in classrooms, hallways, and the fellowship center.

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Order enough for every member to receive one. The guide is a call to prayer and a description of what your gifts will accomplish. Distribute them at worship as a bulletin insert or mail them to every family.

ENVELOPE

Order enough for every member. Place them in the offering plates or distribute them as bulletin inserts. Make extras available in the church foyer, offices and classrooms.

DVD/CD

Short video testimonies from Margaret Lackey Missionaries are included that can be used in worship services or prayer groups. PowerPoint slides can be used as sermon illustrations or pre-service announcements. Drop-in ads for your newsletter are available on the CD side, and printable mission stories can be duplicated for prayer groups or Bible study classes.

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Commercially produced banners with the UNLIMITED theme can be ordered as priced resources in 10"x17.5" or 32"x69.5" size by calling Laura Marler at (800) 748-1651 or (601) 292-3231.

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PRAYER POINTS

serve others as faithful stewards of the manifold grace of God. — 1 Peter 4:10

Let us thank God for his UNLIMITED Grace

- Grace shared freely through Christ
- Grace that covers all our sin
- Grace that includes all people who are in need
- Grace that endows us with undeserved gifts and abilities
- Grace that reflects the beauty and glory of Christ

Let us serve God with UNLIMITED Faithfulness

- Service that expresses the compassion of Christ
- Service that demonstrates our obedience to Christ
- Service empowered by the Spirit of Christ
- Service focused on the needs of others
- Service that mobilizes churches for the glory of Christ

Let us partner with God in UNLIMITED Stewardship

- Stewardship that values God's generosity toward believers
- Stewardship that honors the trust God places in us
- Stewardship distinguished by generosity and sacrificial giving
- Stewardship that leverages the redemptive power of Christ
- Stewardship that expands the Kingdom of Christ

BIBL i O C i P H E R

SIH KQZ DQVYXZYHB BAE WQJY
 HQMTOZ IE, AX HBTH, MBAWY MY
 MYOY NYH EAXXYOE, DBOA EH ZAYZ
 CQO IE.

OQVTXE CAJY: YAKBH

Clue: $X = N$

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Ezekiel 36:27

By Charles Marx, 1932-2004, © 2005

MS POSITIONS

MINISTER OF MUSIC PART TIME POSITION BAPTIST CHURCH IN HERNANDO, MISSISSIPPI. Please mail resume to... Parkway Baptist Church, 50 N. Parkway, Hernando, MS 38632. Or email to parkway_baptist@comcast.net

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PINE GROVE BAPTIST CHURCH, PICAYUNE, MS IS SEEKING A FULL TIME PASTOR. Interested candidates should have a seminary degree and experience in administering church staff. Send resumes to Pine Grove Baptist Church, 34 Pine Grove Rd., Picayune, MS 39466 to the attention of the Pastor Search Committee.

GOOD HOPE BAPTIST CHURCH, NANIH WAIYA (NEAR LOUISVILLE) IS SEEKING A FULL TIME ASSOCIATE PASTOR TO YOUTH&CHILDREN. Send resumes to 12956 Hwy 490 Louisville Ms 39339

FULL-TIME SENIOR PASTOR. New Hope Baptist Church, Clarkdale area. Send resumes to 6573 Highway 145, Meridian, MS 39301 NLT August 31, 2013, ATTN Pastor Search Committee.

IMMANUEL BAPTIST CHURCH, NATCHEZ, MS. IS ACCEPTING RESUMES FOR A FULL TIME PASTOR. Please mail resumes to Immanuel Baptist Church 684 Hwy 61 North Natchez, Ms. 39120 Attn: Pastor Search Committee

BELEN BAPTIST CHURCH NEAR MARKS, MS, IS SEEKING A BI-VOCATIONAL MINISTER OF MUSIC AND YOUTH. Housing and secular work opportunity available. Please send resumes via e-mail to cjr565@aol.com.

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College and Seminary News



WILLIAM CAREY UNIVERSITY broke ground on its new School of Business building July 19. Pictured are Hal McMahan, vice president at Mac's Construction Company, Inc.; Kevin Lewis, architect with Landry and Lewis Architects, PA; Cheryl Dale, dean of the School of Business at William Carey University; Dr. Tommy King, president of WCU; Lewis Myrick, Sr., WCU Board of Trustees; Joan Warren, WCU Board of Trustees; Joselyne Niyonshuti, business student at WCU; and Scott Hummel, provost at WCU.

In other College and Seminary News:

► The Mississippi chapter of the **New Orleans Seminary Alumni Association** will hold its annual meeting in conjunction with the Mississippi Baptist Convention noon, Oct. 29, in Fellowship Hall West, First Church, Jackson. \$10. Chuck Kelley, speaker. To reserve, call (662) 873-2862 or email Britt Williamson, chapter president, at britt.williamson@gmail.com. For more information, visit the chapter's Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/NobtsMsAlumni>.

► The National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) has announced that 898 programs have

been named 2012-13 NAIA Scholar-Teams. **William Carey University** was well represented with six programs selected as a NAIA Scholar Team. For a team to be considered for the NAIA Scholar-Team award, it must have a minimum 3.0 grade-point average (on a 4.0 scale) as defined by the institution. Women's Tennis led the way for WCU with a 3.62 GPA. Other Carey scholar teams include softball (3.55), women's soccer (3.28), women's cross country (3.16), men's tennis (3.09), and men's soccer (3.02). Four other WCU programs just missed being selected as a Scholar-Team. Those programs were: Women's Golf (2.99), Men's Track & Field (2.98), Men's Basketball (2.97) and Women's Track & Field (2.93). Overall WCU athletics posted a 3.06 GPA for the 2012-13 academic year.

FORBES

cont. from p.2

giving it the highest form of protection under law. Thomas Jefferson emphasized the value of freedom of conscience when he stated that "no provision in our Constitution ought to be dearer to man than that

which protects the rights of conscience against the enterprises of the civil authority."

Freedom of religion is more than freedom of worship. Freedom of religion is the freedom to live every aspect of our lives according to our faith. When individuals are faced with choosing between exercising their faith or defending a law-

suit or paying a fine, they are being deprived of a guaranteed constitutional right.

Forbes represents the Fourth District of Virginia in the U.S. House of Representatives. He is a member of Great Bridge Church in Chesapeake, Va.

Truth is not relative.

Find it in the One who is the way, truth, and life.

Simply share the following prayer with God in your own words:

1. Lord, I admit that I need you. (I have sinned.)
2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death. (I repent.)
3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you. (I believe in Jesus.)
4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life.

From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with Him. (I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)

"But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name." (John 1:12)

If you make a decision for Christ today, contact a local Southern Baptist church for spiritual guidance.

SYRIA

cont. from p. 1

According to Antonio Guterres, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the world has not seen an outflow of refugees at such a rate since the Rwandan genocide almost 20 years ago.

UNHCR officers report that 6,000 Syrians a day flee to nearby Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq, Turkey, and Egypt to escape the horrors of the Mideast nation's civil war. To date, the UNHCR has registered nearly two million people who have fled Syria, while an estimated five million internally displaced persons remain within Syria's borders.

Host countries are beginning to feel the strain of the magnitude of refugees, with Iraq now closing its borders to those fleeing Syria. Guterres, in an address to the UN Security Council on July 16, issued a plea for the international community to keep their borders open to Syrians. He fears catastrophic results if Egypt, Turkey, or Jordan also choose to close their borders.

"We cannot go on treating the impact of the Syrian crisis as a simple humanitarian emergency," Guterres said.

Baptist Global Response (BGR) has joined numerous non-governmental organizations in response to the overwhelming needs of Syrian refugees. Jeff Palmer, BGR executive director, reported that through local part-

nerships nearly \$700,000 worth of assistance has been mobilized, supplying food packets, hygiene kits, and temporary shelter.

"We have been able to assist response in four of the surrounding countries with refugees and several places inside the country with internally displaced persons," Palmer said.

A majority of the aid supplied through BGR has gone to people in areas that Palmer said "have fallen through the cracks of assistance from other groups."

Zaatari, a refugee camp in Jordan, is home to 160,000 Syrians, making it the fifth largest city in Jordan. According to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees office, women and children make up three-fourths of the registered refugees. The camp also hosts Iraqis, Somalis, Afghans, and Sudanese who had left their countries to Syria in search of a better life.

"We are not only watching the destruction of a country, but also of its people," UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator Valerie Amos said.

Alan, the Christian worker, said one of the foremost needs is for passionate prayer for Syrians to "really hear that there is hope, when your world is shattered around you and when there is no clear answer or direction in your country. There is a way that is very clearly marked and set out before people."

With the need so great around him, Alan remembers the times

that Jesus fed large crowds of people, such as when His disciples only had a few fish and loaves of bread to feed thousands. Yet Jesus took the little they had, multiplied it, and met a huge need.

"Maybe that's what God is doing, building our faith in the midst of the crisis, asking us to be faithful with the little He has given us and offering it," Alan said. "Jesus is saying, 'Trust me to use it, to touch hundreds and thousands.'"

Alan believes this crisis should shake the body of Christ, as if Jesus is saying, "My bride, I want you to be active and alive in the world. I don't want you to hide in your churches and hide in your little communities, because that's not what I have called you to. I have called you to engage, yes engage in the midst of danger, engage in the midst of bullets and hurt and pain and things that we can't solve."

Ways to pray:

■ For the many internationally displaced peoples of Syria, that they may encounter the love and peace of Jesus Christ within the camps and the countries they have made their temporary homes.

■ That there will be peace in the land.

■ For BGR workers and partners and others aid workers to have wisdom and knowledge as to the best places and methods to minister to the millions in need.

Baptist Global Response can be visited on the Internet at goBGR.com.

Revivals & Homecomings

► **Sardis Church, Smith County:** 125th anniversary/homecoming and revival, Aug. 4 - 7; Sun., 10:30 a.m.; Jim Futral, speaker, followed by lunch and afternoon singing; Mon. - Wed., 7 p.m.; Earl Clarke, speaker; Tim Robertson, music and pastor.

► **Cedar Grove Church, Lena:** Revival, Aug. 4 - 7; Sun., 11 a.m. and 5 p.m.; Mon. - Wed., 7 p.m.; Sam Moore, speaker; Henry Heitmann, pastor.

► **Pleasant Hill Church, Bogue Chitto:** Homecoming, Aug. 4; service, 10:30 a.m., followed by fellowship meal; Dave Champagne, speaker; Tom Moak, music.

► **Sunrise Church, Petal:** Homecoming, Aug. 4; Sunday School, 9:45 a.m.; worship, 10:50 a.m., followed by fellowship meal; Kely Young, speaker.

► **Knights Valley Church, Clarke County:** Homecoming and revival, Aug. 4 - 7; Sun., 10 a.m. music with Barna-Castle Gospel Group; worship, 11 a.m., followed by dinner; Gayle Pope, speaker. Mon. - Wed., 7 p.m.; Charles Davis, speaker; Troy Donahoe, pastor.

► **Society Hill Church, Oakvale:** Revival, Aug. 4 - 7; Sun., 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon. - Wed., 7 p.m.; Danny Stephens, speaker; Wesley Lee,

music; Jake Staten, pastor.

► **Holcomb Church, Holcomb:** Revival, Aug. 4 - 7; Sun., 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon. - Wed., 7 p.m.; James Spencer, speaker; Kevin Tribble, pastor.

► **Clifton Church, Forest:** Revival, Aug. 4 - 7; Sun., 10:45 a.m., followed by lunch; Steve Abercrombie, speaker; 7 p.m. nightly; Clarence Cooper, speaker; Nolan Bishop Family, music.

► **Shiloh Church, Carroll Association:** Aug. 2 - 4; Fri. - Sat., 7 p.m.; Sun., 11 a.m.; Dean Stewart, speaker; Doug Warren, music and pastor.

► **Crooked Creek Church, Silver Creek:** Homecoming, Aug. 4; 11 a.m., followed by covered dish lunch, memorial service, and history of the church; Leonard Walters, speaker; Pearl Quartet, music; Chad Carney, pastor.

► **Murphy Creek Church, Louisville:** Revival, Aug. 4 - 7; Sun., 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon. - Wed., 11 a.m. and 7 p.m.; Dan Robertson, speaker; Billy Bowie, music.

► **Ephesus Church, Forest:** "Awesome August Revival Sundays", Aug. 4, 11, 18, and 25; 11 a.m. and 6 p.m. each Sunday. Speakers: Aug. 4, John Yates; Aug. 11, Reggie Williams; Aug. 18, Paul Smith; Aug. 25, Andy Boles; Jim Everett, pastor.

IRAN

cont. from p. 1

south of Tehran, after being arrested last fall.

"Mohammad Roghangir was sentenced to six years, Masoud Rezaie to five years, Mehdi Ameruni and Bijan Farokhpour Haghighi to three years, Shahin Lahooti and Soroush Saraie to two and half years each. Eskandar Rezaie and Roxana Foroughi were both sentenced to one year in prison," CSW reported.

"It is both disappointing and deplorable that the Iranian regime persists in detaining religious minorities on political charges as has occurred, once again, in this case," CSW's Mervyn Thomas said.

"These Christians in no way constitute a threat to the state. We call for their unconditional release and urge the government to end the practice of characterizing legitimate religious activities as national security crimes and to uphold the right of all religious minorities to freedom of religion and belief," he said.

CSW press officer Kiri Kankhwende told Morning Star News that little has changed in terms of religious freedom for non-Muslims in Iran since the election in June of the country's supposedly more moderate president, Hassan Rouhani.

"It is now common practice to subject religious minorities

to political charges, as any alternative belief system is deemed a threat to the theocratic state," Kankhwende said.

The eight Christians earlier were given enormous bail terms meant to cause severe financial hardships as punishment, CSW said. The bail amounts ranged between \$80,000 and \$200,000.

Morning Star News also reported on Mostafa Bordbar, 27, a convert to Christianity from Islam who is being held in Evin prison and could face 10 years there if convicted on charges of participating in an "illegal gathering and participating in a house church."

Bordbar's case is being handled by Judge Pir-Abbas, who is known as the "hanging judge" for assigning long prison sentences and death penalties. Pir-Abbas sentenced Abedini, Morning Star News said.

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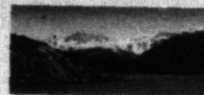
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God Sends His Son • Matthew 4:17-24; John 1:1-2, 11-14, 18, 29

God's Story reaches a pinnacle in the coming of Jesus Christ into our world. This lesson is about Jesus' one-of-a-kind identity, purpose, and ministry. May all who study this week's lesson either come to accept Jesus as their Savior and Lord or recommit their lives to His service if they are already believers. This lesson can help you to recognize who Jesus is and to believe and to follow Him.

On September 2, 1973, I prayed this simple prayer, "Lord, I do not know what she has that I don't, but I sure would like it!" The "she" in my prayer was a dedicated Christian woman just a few years older than me. She loved the Lord and did not care who knew it. I had gone to church all my life, but she clearly had something inside her I didn't have. I prayed the one line prayer above. I did not know a lot of Scripture; I did not know a lot of theology. I did know her relationship with the Lord was qualitatively superior to mine. God answered my prayer immediately. What I did not have that she did have was Jesus! So at about 3 pm on that Sunday afternoon, I accepted Jesus as my Savior and Lord. I hope you know Him today.

The Son's Identity

(John 1:1-2, 14)

Other Gospel writers began with Jesus' birth (Matthew and Luke) or baptism (Mark). John began his Gospel in eternity with the same words found in Genesis 1:1,

"In the beginning..." (John 1:1; Gen. 1:1). He did this to equate the Savior of John's Gospel with the Creator of Genesis. Jesus is the Eternal Logos or Word who was "with God" and in truth "was God" (John 1:1-2; NIV).

John was excited by the fact this Eternal Word "became flesh and made His dwelling among us" (1:14). The clause "made His dwelling" renders the Greek verb *skēnoō*, meaning "to pitch a tent." In modern parlance, John might say, "The Word became flesh and moved into the house next door." Thus, this incarnated Word marks the decisive moment when the transcendent God became profoundly near. Interestingly, John established the significance of this incarnation, or God becoming a man, before he even gave the man's name. Thus, the name Jesus Christ does not appear until John 1:17.

The Son's Purpose

(John 1:11-13, 18, 29)

Jesus' purpose in coming was to take

away the sins of the world by being God's Lamb (1:29). He offered this salvation first to His own people, but they did not receive Him (1:11). Yet, everyone who did receive Him, to those believing in His name, He gave power (or authority) to become God's children (1:12).

This new status as God's children comes into being not because of any human

man maneuvering, but rather it is always "of God" (1:13). True salvation is initiated by God and made effectual through

Jesus by the Holy Spirit. When I accepted Christ, I was saved because God said so, not because I said so. I accepted the gift He offered. I took Him at His word. You can too. God is always good for His word!

The Son's purpose was bound up in Jesus' ministry as declared in John 1:18. The Greek New Testament emphatically states, "God, no one has seen ever! God, 'the One and Only' (monogenēs), who is at the Father's side, has made Him known." The clause "made Him known" combines the demonstrative pronoun

in Greek (Him = that One), and the verb *exegeomai*, meaning "to explain, to interpret." Every pastor does exegesis on a biblical text before preaching or teaching. "Exegesis" comes from "exegeomai."

The Son's Ministry

(Matt. 4:17-24)

Jesus preached repentance (Matt. 4:17). He disciplined His followers (4:18-22). He taught in Galilee's synagogues, preached the good news (euangelion), and healed (therapeuō) sick people (4:23). Jesus' healing ministry was so effective, He quickly developed a widespread reputation resulting in people bringing their sick to Jesus (4:24). Jesus healed as a means to tell people about God's kingdom.

Nearly 2,000 years separate our day from the time of Jesus' earthly ministry, but humanity's needs have not changed. People need the Lord as much as ever. Have you accepted His free gift of grace? Have you repented of your sins and asked Jesus to forgive you? Have you received His message about the Kingdom of Heaven? Your salvation is the reason God sent His Son!

VanHorn is Dean of the Mississippi College School of Christian Studies and the Arts.

Am I Headed for Failure? • Ecclesiastes 5:8-16, 18-20; 6:10-12

Our present society is highly materialistic. The majority of people give high if not top priority to earning money and accumulating wealth. That priority has led many to practices that are immoral and even illegal and others to become workaholics, sacrificing their spiritual lives, church responsibilities, and families on the altar of "getting ahead." Those who attain their materialistic goals do not find the satisfaction and fulfillment they expected. God wants people to acknowledge Him as the Giver of all good gifts, including their material resources and to become good stewards of those gifts.

The immensity of Solomon's wealth is incomprehensible. Even the Queen of Sheba, who was accustomed to enormous wealth, on a visit with Solomon, was stunned by the luxury and beauty of his personal residence, parks, wild life reserves, outstanding temple, and lavish resorts. When a man with this magnitude of wealth talks about finances, he knows his subject well.

Solomon gives these six reasons why amassing great wealth as a goal in life is futile. He says, first, oppression of the poor is caused by the greed of the people in business and government who find and seize opportunities to gain personal wealth dishonestly at the expense of others. Second, the greedy are never satisfied—more is always desired. Thirdly, wealth attracts those

who are unproductive and who "sponge off" those who have in abundance. Fourth, the abundance of the rich man will not allow him to sleep because of the great pressures it causes.

Fifth, one's possessions cause him grief if they are lost, leaving him nothing for his son's inheritance—nothing lasting to pass on. While hoarding to build up his possessions, he actually does harm to himself and does not take time to experience the fruits of his labor. One cannot take his accumulations of wealth with him when he dies, so it seems he

toils for the wind. The philosophy of placing one's faith solely in the acquisition of possessions will lead to corruption, frustration, emptiness, and loneliness.

Then Solomon states that it is good for a man to enjoy eating and drinking and finding satisfaction in his labor. When God gives any man wealth and possessions and enables him to enjoy them, to accept his lot and be happy in his work—this is a gift of

God. People can find joy when they view material resources as a gift from God that they are to use wisely and generously.

The sixth reason is that wealth does not guarantee happiness, enjoyment, or satisfaction. Solomon cites another situation he has witnessed "under the sun." A man is greatly blessed by God with wealth, possessions and honor so that he lacks nothing his heart desires, but he is not able to enjoy

them and a stranger enjoys them instead. Apparently, the man did not have a son or heir and perhaps died young himself, leaving his

wealth to be distributed according to the custom of that day and enjoyed by a stranger who did not work to earn the fortune.

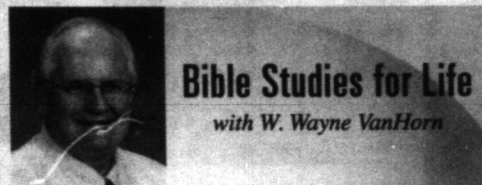
A hypothetical situation of great exaggeration is introduced to make a stronger argument of the futility of putting one's faith in acquiring wealth. A man has a hundred children and lives many years, but does not enjoy his prosperity, nor does he

have a proper burial. A still-born baby is better off than this man because he comes and goes into obscurity, and has no history to live up to. Even if the older man lived two thousand years, it would only add more sorrow, and he like everyone would end up in the grave.

The term translated "appetite" is often rendered "soul" in other passages. Thus, the soul is never satisfied and an empty life is not satisfied by work. Depression remains amid the conflicts of discouragement. Solomon seems to be dealing with facing reality—the real thing is better than all of the dreams hoped for. The reality—man needs God. However, the world does need a few of those who dream, for they keep the others hoping.

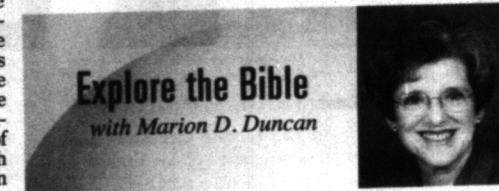
Solomon makes three observations—the first of which is that God is sovereign; second, man is not sovereign; and third, disputing is a waste of time and effort. Humans are limited in their ability to understand and explain the mysteries of life, but can trust their Creator and Redeemer. C. S. Lewis said, "To argue with God is to argue with the very power that makes it possible to argue at all."

Duncan is a member of First Church, Starkville.



Bible Studies for Life

with W. Wayne VanHorn



Explore the Bible

with Marion D. Duncan

SUDAN

cont. from p. 1

literature. After the home is raided, the officers take the foreigner into custody for hours, days, or for some weeks, Lloyd said.

"On paper Christians are still legally respected and there is still

freedom of religion, but in actuality, it's not being honored by the system," Lloyd said, noting that the raids are "obviously illegal, and everyone says it is illegal but they are doing it."

Victoria Channing (not her real name), a Christian worker who called Sudan home for many years, made the difficult decision

to leave in light of recent developments. "Leaving Sudan has been one of the most painful processes I have ever experienced. I cried for days before and after leaving," she said.

Living under the fear of deportation or arrest, "You wake up every morning thinking today is the day security officers are wait-

ing for you downstairs or at your workplace," Channing reported.

The world watched as Sudan's president, Omar al-Bashir, began to form a new government without the southern portion of the country. Bashir had seized power in a military coup in 1989 and become Sudan's president in 1993.

He has since faced numer-

ous charges from the International Criminal Court, including genocide.

Prior to South Sudan's independence, al-Bashir declared on national television, "If South Sudan secedes, we'll change the constitution. There will be no question of cultural or ethnic diversity [in Sudan]."

Just for the Record



CHILDREN AND TEENS FROM FIRST CHURCH, EUPORA, recently attended Student Life Summer Camp for Kids at Shocco Springs, Talladega, Ala.



TEN CHILDREN FROM MT. OLIVET CHURCH, FOREST, attended Kid's Camp at Central Hills Retreat. Shown are Eli Cooper, Ethan Crain, Franklin Joe Bradley, Landin Pierce, Maddie Pierce, Bailey Prestage, Candice Crain, Mollie Chambers, Meagan King, and Karlee Polk. Chaperones included Joey Crain and Brenda King. Bruce Robinson, pastor.

In other Church News:

► **Okahola Church, Purvis**, is hosting the 2013 Fan the Flame Men's Conference, The Spiritual Man, on Aug. 10, 8 - 11:30 a.m., featuring breakfast and notes. Dennis Deese, speaker. Love offering.

► **Long Creek Church, Meridian**, is hosting Danny Wolfe, gospel trumpeter and vocalist, Aug. 4, 11 a.m. Wolfe will also be in concert at Chunky Church, Chunky, Aug. 4, 6 p.m.

► **The Christian Women's Job Corps and Christian Men's Job Corps of Northeast Mississippi** is hosting an open house celebrating 15 years of ministry. Aug. 10, noon, at their new location at the Spanish Village, 144 South Thomas St., Suite 101-9, Tupelo. This is the longest existing site in Mississippi.

► **Mt. Pisgah Church, Sandhill**, will hold Jan Jones Day Aug. 25 in celebration of her 25th anniversary as music and youth director. Service and recognition, 11 a.m.



PARKWAY CHURCH, KOSCIUSKO, held a baby dedication June 9 for Will Clanton. Shown are Will and his parents, Bradley & Dawn Clanton.



MEMBERS OF PLEASANT RIDGE CHURCH, DUMAS, made and presented sleeping mats to the Salvation Army in Tupelo. The mats were made from plastic bags. Shown are Betty Smith, Connie Haley, Teen Hodges, and Travis DeCantner. Receiving the mats was Susan Gilbert, far right, director of social services.



ETHEL CHURCH, ETHEL, held a deacon ordination July 7. Shown are deacons Kevin Sprayberry, pastor Joey Barnard, and Matthew Cauthen.

FIRST CHURCH, DAYS, LAKE CORMORANT, presented a check of support to Ecuadorian missionary K.B. Billingsley during a dinner in her honor. Shown are Joe Crawford, Billingsley, and Bob Poley.



Submission Guidelines

The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention. News items and/or photographs depicting benefits and activities for secular or outside organizations will not be published.

Preferred method: news may be submitted electronically to the e-mail address below, and must be included in the message segment of an e-mail form. Secondary method: news may be typewritten or neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper and mailed. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone. Due to ever-present virus threats, no text attachments will be accepted. Photograph attachments in JPEG format are permissible.

Please make articles concise. Include the who, what, when, where details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

Photographs must be submitted electronically

via e-mail, as attachments in JPEG format. Hard copy photographs mailed through the postal service will not be accepted. Photographs must be clear, sharp, and well-lit. Photographs must depict people. No landscape, building, or object-only photographs will be printed. Photographs containing inappropriate gestures and objectionable clothing will not be published. Cell phone photographs and other low resolution items that do not reproduce well on newsprint are generally not publishable.

There is no guarantee that news items and/or photographs will be published, and unsolicited material will not be acknowledged. All news items are subject to editing, and all photographs are subject to cropping. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date. Articles that are not date-sensitive will be published on a space-available basis. These guidelines are not meant to be exhaustive.

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